

Acts  
Persecution, Providence, and Professions of Faith  
Acts 8:1-25

The question is often asked, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” It is a question that we ask when we begin to wrestle with what we think is a conflict between the compassion of God and the trials and suffering of this life. The truth is that bad things happen to good people because bad things happen, period. Bad things happen, not because of the world God created, but because of the one we create with our sin and disobedience.

1. The Spirit uses gospel rejection to fulfill His purposes.
  
2. The Spirit uses gospel witnesses to fulfill His purposes.
  
3. The Spirit uses gospel discernment to fulfill His purposes.

God is providentially at work through persecution and prosperity to fulfill His purposes. His desire is for the nations to come to know Him and for people from every tribe, people groups, and languages to enjoy Him forever. The early church testified and preached the word of the Lord, and they did so in unlikely places. Where will you go and to whom will you speak the testimony of Christ’s redemptive work in your life?

For further consideration

How do stories like this shape the way you see the church outside of the United States? Does the persecution of our brothers and sisters in other places resonate with you to the point that you would pray for them? Does it affect the fervor with which you worship and commit yourself to the work of the kingdom knowing that you have the freedom and resources to do so much more than others? How does Simons’ story serve as warning to us? Think about your conversion and those moment sin your walk with Christ where you knew He was walking with you. Did those moments invoke a sense of joy and do you still carry that sense of joy with you? If so, what does it compel you to do this week to spread that joy to others? If not, what needs to happen in your devotional or prayer life to have that joy restored?